

REMARKS

Claims 15-54 and 60-64 were already withdrawn pursuant to the Examiner's 2003 Restriction Requirement. Essentially, the Examiner is asserting that Groups I and VII are properly divisible (even as apparatus and related process claim sets) because "they can be used to practice another and materially different process, such as crimping and cutting materials such as ribbon, thread and other strings."

The Applicants respectfully point out that this is in error, since each of the independent claims 1 and 55 recite crimping of a ferrule and cutting of suture (i.e., NOT ribbon, thread and other strings). It is also noted that the Examiner has ALREADY performed a search and formulated rejections based on both the apparatus and method claims.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement are respectfully requested. Because the Applicants are required to make a provisional election, Group I, claims 1-14 are provisionally elected.

REMARKS

The requirements for restriction being the only issue raised in the present Office Action, this paper is fully responsive to the same. The Applicants hereby reserve the right to file a divisional application for any non-elected subject matter in this application.

No new matter has been entered and no additional fees are believed to be required. However, if any fees are due with respect to this Response, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,
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